

Records Pertaining to the Robert Harmon Family and the Chestnut Street Methodist Church

From the Leaders Meeting Minutes and Membership Records - 1836-1845.¹

Information Compiled by Merlin D. Burt - May 9, 1994

February 26, 1840: Robert and Eunice Harmon join the Chestnut Street Methodist Church.

May 17, 1840: Sarah Harmon joins the Chestnut Street Methodist Church.

May 17, 1840: Mary P. Harmon joins the Chestnut Street Methodist Church.

June 23, 1840: "The following persons were recommended for probation--James H. Roach, Robert Harmon Jr. . . ."

July 5, 1840: Robert Harmon Jr. is baptized by immersion by Geo. Webber (according to the baptism book). This is after a much shorter time than usual. Normally a person had to wait at least six months on probation before baptism. The membership record book says he joined in "1841." It is a little unclear which year is right.

July 6, 1840: "Veranus C. Hanson, Robert Harmon, & Richard Cole were recommended for leaders."

August 12, 1840: "Monday evening August 12, 1840. The Official Board met in the class room in the vestry. Opened by prayer by John Hobart. 1. Appointed the preacher in charge secretary of the board [John Hobart the new preacher]. 2. Voted that bro. M [Moses]. Springer preach in the north part of the city at 5 o'clock Sabbath Evening. 3. Bro Harmon, Bradbury, & Mitchell were appointed a Committee to procure a preaching place for bro. Springer. 4. Voted to have a public prayer meeting Tuesday evening and to dispense with the one held Wednesday Eve. 5. Voted that the class and Doctrinal prayer meetings remain for the present as they are--the class be on Thursday and the Prayer m. On Friday Eve. 6. Voted that the Converts meeting be held in future on Wednesday eve. 7. Voted that on Communion day there be but one sermon. 8. Bro's Leavitt Lowell & Clark to be constituted a Committee of arrangements for the Kennibunkport Campmeeting. The Board adjourned. [Signed] John Hobart."

August 24, 1840: "The committee appointed to procure a preaching place for Bro. M. Springer reported that the Brackett St. School house could be occupied. It was determined that Bro. Springer at the above named place every Sabbath evening."

October 31, 1840 (Friday Evening): "The matter of lighting and warming the B. Street school house was introduced--it was left for bro Springer to manage."

September 20, 1841: "Meeting opened by Br. Simmons in the usual way. . . The following were recommended for probation: Wm. Neal, Ellen Harmon."

¹ Grammar and most punctuation is as it appears in the original handwritten record.

March 22, 1842: "The following persons were recommended for probation in the M. E. Church. . . Elizabeth Harmon."

April 3, 1842: "The following resolution was presented by Bro. Clark and unanimously adopted. Resolved that in the opinion of this board that use of Alcoholic wine for sacramental purposes is injurious and² that one of the Stewards be requested to procure hereafter for said use the pure juice of the grape."

May 23, 1842: "Board met and after the usual services the cases of such as had been on trial 6 months were taken up.

J. Amos Taylor	Passed	
Margaret Lovitt	"	
Ellen Harmon	"	Immersed ³
John Ross	"	Sprinkled
Julia Libby	"	Sprinkled
Soloman David	"	Sprinkled
Josiah Brooks	"	Sprinkled
Elizabeth Cobb	"	Sprinkled
Margarett Hall	"	Sprinkled
Rebecca L Dunn	"	
Mary Hatch	"	Immersed
Stephen Stewart(?)	"	
Charlotte Edwards	"	
Betsey L. Mugfar	"	Sprinkled
Chas. Walker	"	
Hannah Wiswill	"	Immersed
Mary G. Ross	"	Sprinkled
Persis Stockbridge	"	

Certain others were to be seen on the subject of full membership." [Signed] J. Hobart.

- The last dated entry by John Hobart was on June 27, 1842. One of his last acts as pastor was to baptize the above individuals. Apparently he was absent for a time before July 20 when Farrington took over. (See August 8, 1842 board meeting)
- The 1842 Methodist conference year began on July 20. William F. Farrington became the new preacher in charge. At the first board meeting held on August 8, Farrington as the new preacher in charge was made secretary of the board. This was standard Methodist procedure.
- Up to July 22, 1842 all the local classes had met on Thursday evening. On July 22, several classes were allowed to meet on Friday instead of Thursday.

June 26, 1842: Ellen Harmon is baptized by immersion and joins the Chestnut Street Methodist Church.

² Frequently "+" is used instead of "and."

³ Baptism information in the right column is compiled from the church's record of church members, and is listed here only for interest and convenience.

October 31, 1842: "The following person passed the board to be received in full. . . Elizabeth Harmon. . ." [It appears she was never baptized. She was never actually recorded on the church books as a member and was not excluded with the rest of the Harmon family in August/September 1843.]

February 6, 1843: "Brs L. Gooding and A. Bradbury [were] appointed a committee [these two men were the committee selected] to wait on Br. R. Harmon in reference to his anti-Methodistical conduct." [Signed] W. F. Farrington.

- There is no record of a report being brought back by this committee.

March 27, 1843: "Brother Gidion Foster appointed a committee [he was made a committee of one] to visit Br. Harmon in reference to his irregularities." The next action of the board on this date was "Voted to dissolve class No. 21 & [and] connect the members with Brs. Covill and Eaton's classes."

April 23, 1843: "Br. Foster reported as committee on Br Robert Harmon's irregularities--report not accepted or laid on the table. Whereupon a committee of three were appointed Viz. Brs. Eaton, Gooding, and Hinds, before whom Br. Harmon is to be cited to appear and answer for himself. Various matters of interest to the church were presented and considered by the board." [Signed] W. F. Farrington.

May 1, 1843: "The board voted that the Leaders make a special effort to induce their delinquent members to attend class meetings." [From the continuing records of the board it is clear that only males led out in the home classes]

May 29, 1843: "Brs Clarke, Barnes, and Simmons--a committee on Br. R. Harmon's irregularities."

June 5, 1843: "Bros. Leavitt, Lovell and Covell appointed a committee to keep order in our congregations in the evening meetings and prosecute all offenders if necessary." [The evening meetings referred to are probably the home classes. From about February 1843 on there is a much sterner attitude coming into the board. A number of people are dealt with on various issues. R. Harmon seems to be the only one who is singled out in regards to Millerism. It is possible that some of the others were being dealt with over the same issue. Statements like "The cases of Br and Sister McDowell in reference to their irregularities but defer final action on their cases for further and more particular information."]

August 6, 1843: "Br. E. Hinds dismissed as Leader and Br. Brett recommended to lead the class in his stead."

August 14, 1843: "Brs. Lovell, Leavitt, and S. Covell appointed a committee of trial on the cases of Robert Harmon and those of his family who are members of the M. E. Church in this City, all of whom having violated the rules of our Discipline in their long absence from our church and ordinances and supporting an Anti-Methodist doctrine and congregation Vis. Millerism &c. [and etc.] Other matters of interest to the church were canvassed and a general desire manifested to adhere to the old rules of Methodism. [Signed] W. F. Farrington.

August 21, 1843: "Board met at the Parsonage and opened with the usual services. . . . Committee on Br. Robert Harmon and family cases reported. Report accepted--."

September, 1843: The church record book has the entire family excluded under this date. All of them have written under the exclusion date, "For a breach of--Discipline." Robert and Eunice Harmon and Sarah have in addition to this the further statement, "Under Peculiar Circumstances."

September 2, 1843: "Quarterly Meeting Conference for Portland Station. Met according to appointment in the vestry of the Methodist M. House Sept. 2, 1843 4 O'clock P.M. Opened with singing and prayer. C. Baker (P.E.) W. F Farrington (Pr. in chg) [preacher in charge] H. C. Lovell, H. C. Barnes, N. I. Mitewell [?], M. Turner, Stanley Covell, T. Files, J. A. Sandborn. S. Lovell chosen Secretary.

"The P. Elder inquired if there were any appeals. The Pr. in charge arose and stated that Robert Harmon, Eunice Harmon, Robert Harmon Jr., Sarah B. Harmon, and Ellen Harmon had entered an appeal from the decision of a Committee by which they had been expell'd from the M. E. Church, for a breach of the rules of discipline.

"The minutes of the trial being called for, they were presented and read Robert Harmon was present to prosecute the appeal and stated the ground of his appeal at the request of the P. Elder, which was First 'Others in the Church had broken the rules as well as himself.' Secondly 'He could not have the liberty he wanted in our social meetings, as he supposed.' (i.e.) to defend his faith in the doctrines of Mr. Miller. After the case was thoroughly canvass'd, in the Q. Conference, it was unanimously voted to sustain the decision of the committee in his expulsion." It appears the Mary Harmon was not excluded at this time because she had married Samuel Foss on July 5, 1842.⁴

December 4, 1843: "Joseph Carriel presented a request to be dismissed from the M. E. Church. The Board hesitated inasmuch as he had committed himself by his irregularities. But taking all things into consideration, they voted him a dismissal, simply, without a recommendation. His irregularities grew out of his faith in Millerism. . . Brs. Lemuel Gooding and Thomas Files appointed a Committee to wait on Br. and Sister Berry with reference to their irregularities growing out of Millerism."

December 11, 1843: "Committee on Br. and Sister Berry's irregularities Reported, that they manifested no disposition to be Methodists nor would they take themselves off from the Church. The report was accepted, and a Committee of trial appointed, Vis Brs. Thomas Files, C. Foster, and R. Hamilton. Afterward S. R. Leavitt and H. C. Lovell were added to the above committee."

December 25, 1843: "First, The Com. of trial reported that there was a charge prepared against James and Olive Berry for having embraced and given publicity to doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the M. E. Church. Secondly, That Olive Berry had spoken evil of the M. E. Church. Thirdly that they both had neglected the Discipline and ordinances of s'd [said] Church--- The pastor having read the charges to them inquired if they intended to defend themselves against the charges, to which they replied in the negative. They having acknowledged the charges true, no formal _____ of proof was entered into. The Com. of _____ reported that the charges were sustained, they having been previously laboured with and no motion of amendment made. The Pastor declared them expelled from the M. E. Church." [Signed] W. F. Farrington.

W. F. Farrington was replaced by a new minister on September 1, 1844.

September 23, 1844: "A request for dismissal from the M. E. Church was presented from the following persons, Rachel Cushing, Mary A. D. Parker, and Olive Adams--Cause, Millerism. It was on motion voted that they severally have leave to withdraw."

There are a number of individuals that requested to be dismissed from the M. E. Church during the period up to October 1844. I have only listed the ones that specifically mention Miller.

⁴The September 2, 1843 entry comes from the Quarterly meeting book rather than the leaders book or record book.